



FES

foundation for
educational services

**Understanding Needs.
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RE: Comments on the FCC Public Notice DA10-1045

CC Docket No. 02-6
GN Docket No. 09-51

The Foundation for Educational Services (FES) is a nonprofit company that has served the education community for over twenty years. We strive to provide low-cost options for schools and communities to communicate effectively and timely with their students and parents.

As you know, the E-rate program has been an integral source of assistance to K-12 schools nationwide especially during these turbulent economic times. Schools have come to rely on this support to fulfill their critical mission of providing quality education to our nation's youth.

The Public Notice DA10-1045 in reference to CC Docket No. 02-6 and GN Docket No. 09-51 seeks comment on proposed changes to the E-rate Eligible Services List. Specifically, it seeks to make web hosting and domain name registration, separately priced firewalls, and anti-virus and anti-spam software as ineligible for E-rate funding.

Many FES clients utilize E-rate funding to supplement their web hosting costs. Parents and students rely on schools to communicate on a timely basis with them, and the source for this communication is via the web. Parents expect to be able to access the school 24/7 to be kept abreast of important issues, schedule changes, access to performance information, emergency notification updates, etc. Schools must also comply with State and/or Federal reporting laws which require electronic posting of performance information or other types of critical data.

Schools are facing State funding deficits and limited human resources due to budget cuts. They need the ability to use technology to augment their communication efforts and ensure timely release of information. Eliminating funding for web hosting will only further burden already cash strapped schools and overworked Technical Directors from focusing on other key areas of student achievement. Data have proven that student success requires strong parental involvement and a key to that involvement comes from access to timely information. Many schools don't have the financial resources to invest in web servers, back up data centers, disaster recovery, or time to design complex features and ongoing enhancements.

One of our clients was devastated by a tornado. They were able to continue communicating with their students, parents, and community at large because their web site was hosted and not impacted by this tragedy. It became their voice to the community. Web hosting is not a luxury; it is a necessity in the 21st century.

We urge you to reconsider this proposed change and retain web hosting as a Priority 1 funded service. We applaud the FCC's continued efforts to improve our nation's K-12 schools, and provide an equal level of service to all that need it.

Sincerely,
C. J. Thoma
President and CEO
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